In the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Withdrawn) A method for identifying an antagonist or inhibitor of the expression of a gene encoding a polypeptide essential for bacterial growth or survival wherein said gene is selected from the group consisting of ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG and/or yjbC, the sequence of said genes being shown in Fig. 1, or a fragment, derivative or ortholog thereof, said method comprising the steps of

(a) testing a candidate antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors for the inhibition or reduction of transcription of said gene or a fragment or derivative thereof; or

(b) testing a candidate antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors for the inhibition or reduction of translation of mRNA transcribed from said gene or a fragment or derivative thereof; and

(c) identifying an antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors that tests positive in step (a) and/or (b).

2. (Withdrawn) A method for testing a candidate antagonist or inhibitor of a polypeptide or a mRNA essential for bacterial growth or survival encoded by a gene selected from the group consisting of ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG and/or yjbC, the sequence of said genes being shown in Fig. 1, or a fragment, derivative or ortholog thereof comprising the steps of

(a) contacting a bacterial cell with a candidate antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors; and

(b) testing whether said contacting leads to cell growth inhibition and/or cell death.

3. (Withdrawn) A method for testing a candidate antagonist or inhibitor of the function of a gene essential for bacterial growth or survival wherein said gene is selected from the group consisting of ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY,

gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG and/or yjbC, the sequence of said genes being shown in Fig. 1, or a fragment, derivative or ortholog thereof, comprising the steps of

(a) contacting a bacterial cell comprising said gene with a candidate antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors; and

(b) testing whether said contacting leads to cell growth inhibition and/or cell death.

4. (Withdrawn) The method of any one of claims 1 to 3 further comprising identifying an antagonist or inhibitor, optionally from said sample of candidate antagonists or inhibitors.

5. (Withdrawn) The method of any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein said inhibitor or antagonist is further improved by peptidomimetics or by applying phage display or combinatorial library technique step(s).

6. (Withdrawn) A method for designing an improved antagonist or inhibitor for the treatment of a bacterial infection or disorder or disease related to a bacterial infection comprising the steps

(a) identification of the binding site of an antagonist or inhibitor to the polypeptide ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG and/or yjbC, the sequence of said genes being shown in Fig. 1, or obtained by or identified by the method of any one of claims 1 to 5 by site-directed mutagenesis and chimeric polypeptide studies;

(b) molecular modeling of both the binding site of said antagonist or inhibitor and the structure of said polypeptide; and

(c) modification of said antagonist or inhibitor to improve its binding specificity or affinity for the polypeptide.

7. (Withdrawn) An antagonist or inhibitor of the activity of a polypeptide encoded by a gene selected from the group consisting of ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG and/or yjbC, the sequence of said genes being shown in Fig. 1, or fragment, derivative or ortholog

thereof or of the expression of a gene encoding said polypeptide or said fragment, derivative or ortholog or obtained by or identified by the method of any one of claims 1 to 6.

8. (Withdrawn) A method for producing a therapeutic agent comprising synthesizing the antagonist or inhibitor identified, tested or designed according to the method of any one of claims 1 to 6 or the antagonist or inhibitor of claim 7 or an analog or derivative thereof.

9. (Withdrawn) A method for producing a composition comprising the steps of the method of any one of claims 1 to 6 or synthesizing the antagonist or inhibitor of claim 7 and formulating said inhibitor or antagonist in a pharmaceutically acceptable form.

10. (Withdrawn) A composition comprising an antagonist or inhibitor of claim 7, the therapeutic agent produced by the method of claim 8 or the antagonist or inhibitor obtained by or identified in the method of any one of claims 1 to 6 or produced according to claim 9 and optionally a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

11. (Withdrawn) The composition of claim 10 which is a pharmaceutical composition.

12. (Withdrawn) The composition of claim 10 which is a kit.

13. (Withdrawn) The composition of any one of claims 10 to 12 further comprising an antibiotic and/or cytokine.

14. (Currently amended) A method for identifying an antagonist or inhibitor of the activity of a polypeptide encoded by a gene selected from ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG, or yjbC, or a fragment, derivative or ortholog thereof, or of the expression of a gene encoding said polypeptide or said fragment, derivative or ortholog, said method comprising

(a) testing a candidate antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors for the inhibition or reduction of activity of said polypeptide or said fragment, derivative or ortholog; or

(b) testing a candidate antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors for the inhibition or reduction of transcription of said gene or a fragment or derivative thereof; or

(c) testing a candidate antagonist or inhibitor or a sample comprising a plurality of said candidate antagonists or inhibitors for the inhibition or reduction of translation of mRNA transcribed from said gene or a fragment or derivative thereof; and

(d) identifying as an antagonist or inhibitor a candidate antagonist or inhibitor that tests positive in step (a), (b) and/or (c),

wherein said fragment, derivative or ortholog is a functional equivalent of the wildtype polypeptide.

15. (Previously Presented) A method for preparing a pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of bacterial infections or disorders or diseases related to bacterial infections, comprising combining a pharmaceutical carrier with an antagonist or inhibitor identified in the method of claim 14.

16. (Withdrawn) A method for treating or preventing bacterial infections or diseases or disorders related to bacterial infections comprising the step of administering to a subject in need thereof the antagonist or inhibitor obtained by or identified in the method of any one of claims 1 to 6 or produced according to claim 9 optionally comprised in the pharmaceutical composition according to claim 11.

17. (Currently amended) A method for screening for a ~~polypeptide~~ molecule interacting with a polypeptide encoded by a gene selected from ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG, or yjbC, or a fragment, derivative or ortholog thereof, wherein said molecule is a second polypeptide, and said method comprises using a protein-protein interaction technology.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Withdrawn) Use of conditional mutants in a gene selected from the group consisting of ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG and/or yjbC, the sequence of said genes being shown in Fig. 1, or a fragment, derivative or ortholog thereof or of surrogate ligands against said gene expressed in bacteria to induce a lethal phenotype in bacteria and/or for the analysis of said bacteria for surrogate markers by comparison of RNA or protein profiles in said bacteria with RNA or protein profiles in wild type bacteria, and/or the use of said surrogate markers for the identification of antagonists of the essential function of said gene.

20. (Withdrawn) A method for identifying or isolating a surrogate marker comprising the steps as described in claim 19.

21. (Withdrawn) A method for identifying or isolating a surrogate marker comprising the steps of

(a) inducing a lethal phenotype in bacteria containing a conditional mutant of a gene selected from the group consisting of ygbB, yfhC, yacE, ychB, yejD, yrfl, yggJ, yjeE, yiaO, yrdC, yhbC, ygbP, ybeY, gcpE, kdtB, pfs, ycaJ, b1808, yeaA, yagF, b1983, yidD, yceG and/or yjbC, the sequence of said genes being shown in Fig. 1; and

(b) analysing said bacteria comparing the RNA or protein profile of said bacteria with wild type bacteria.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17, further comprising validating that interaction of said ~~polypeptide~~ molecule with said polypeptide is essential for bacterial survival.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17, further comprising validating that interaction of said ~~polypeptide~~ molecule with said polypeptide prevents growth of bacteria or is lethal to bacteria.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17, further comprising screening for an antagonist or inhibitor of the interaction between said ~~polypeptide~~ molecule and said polypeptide.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein said antagonist or inhibitor of said interaction is a small molecule.

26. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25, further comprising determining whether said small molecule competitively displaces said ~~polypeptide~~ molecule from binding to said polypeptide.